Taylor Rozantz

9-30-09

Period 4

Literary Analysis

Symbolism in a literary work is an object, person, situation, an action, or some other key element that means more than what it suggests on the surface. The symbol could have a literal meaning in the story**,** but outside the story it could represent a whole different meaning or view of a subject. Literature often uses symbolism to correspond a deeper idea than what they are actually writing. The short stories “Miss Brill” and “The Destructors**,**” use a number of symbols to intrigue and stimulate the mind.

Their work involves more than a women going to a park watching a brass band or gang members destroying a house. The challenge for readers is to examine the unspoken story line in reference to what is actually being presented. The literary device called symbolism is a commonly used tool to signify further meaning.

In the short story "Miss Brill**,**" symbolism **gives** a better understanding of the main character, Miss Brill. One of the symbols in the text is the fur coat Miss Brill **wore**. **Miss Brill’s fur alone** resembles **innocence and other variety character traits.** The fur is like a pet to her as told in the text; she brushes it and styles it as other people would care and brush their own dog or cat. She does not find out until later however, that her once very stylish “pet” is now the victim of jokes. The fur coat she wears is instead a preserved dead

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animal corpse. This corresponds to Miss Brill’s inner feelings**;** she looks fine on the outside, but within she is dead and hollow from isolation. She is isolated, friendless, and does not have the connections to participate as a valid contributor to the community. She longs to find a place to belong, yet she is alone. By moving on with her life, she has conversations with her fur and eves-drops on the dialogues of others to feel a sense of belonging.

Another symbol is the woman in the ermine toque and hat. Miss Brill looks down on her to this woman to make herself feel more superior. Miss Brill jokes that the women bought her shabby hat when her hair was yellow. Miss Brill’s joke toward the woman actually shows an outside view of how the world sees Miss Brill. The woman in the ermine toque and hat is in the text to shadow Miss Brill. The woman is thrilled to see the well dressed man, just as Miss Brill is cheerful to see the young couple. Both of these characters, the woman and Miss Brill have characteristics about themselves that do not match the views of normal society.

In the short story called “The Destructors”, there are many uses of symbolism. One of these symbols include Old Misery’s house. Old Misery’s house is located in a setting where the **event of the** war **has** taken an effect on both the people and the land. But despite of all the damage done as a result of the war, there still manages to stand a beautiful house built by a famous architect, Christopher Wren, who was known for working for the wealthy upper class people. The house is a symbol of art, beauty, and the upper classes dominance. **The text** continues to show how Old Misery’s house symbolizes art, when Trevor tells the rest of the Wormsley Common Gang that the house is “beautiful” (Greene 31). The house also sets up a target for the needs to destroy something artistic when it is in an

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environment of war. The destructors of Old Misery’s house called The Wormsley Common Gang, symbolize the effect of war on younger generations. Lastly, the main character and leader of the gang, Trevor, symbolizes demotion**. With** his demotion from the upper class**, it pushes him to want to take** charge and get revenge. Trevor knew the house was part of the upper classes because he used to be part of that class. The gang does not understand the beauty of the house and are uncaring about destroying the house. However, Trevor was exposed to art and aesthetic things while growing up so this gives him even more reason to destroy the house.

Symbolism is a tool used to emphasize events and further describe deeper meanings. In “Miss Brill” the strong symbolism was described though her fur coat. The fur was her friend and a symbol of how lonely and empty she really feels. The destructors however use Old Misery’s house as a symbol of beauty in life even though around it might not seem so beautiful. Symbols in literature often lead to a deeper meaning then what they are actually describing in the story.

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Work Cited

Arp, Thomas R., and Greg Johnson. Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and

Sense. Boston, MA: Heinle, 2008.

Mansfield, Katherine. “Miss Brill” Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and

Sense. Boston, MA: Heinle, 2008. Pages 182-186.

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Symbolism in a literary work is an object, person, situation, an action, or some other key element that means more than what it suggests on the surface. The symbol could have a literal meaning in the story**,** but outside the story it could represent a whole different meaning or view of a subject.

Authors often use symbolism to correspond a deeper idea than what they are actually writing. Writers like Katherine Mansfield**,** who wrote the short story “Miss Brill” and the author of “The Destructors**,**” Graham Greene, use a number of symbols to intrigue and stimulate the mind.

Their work involves more than a women going to a park watching a brass band or gang members destroying a house. The challenge for readers is to examine the unspoken story line in reference to what is actually being presented. The literary device called symbolism is a commonly used tool to signify further meaning.

In Katherine Mansfield's short story "Miss Brill**,**" symbolism **gives** a better understanding of the main character, Miss Brill. One of the symbols in the text is the fur coat Miss Brill **wore**. **Miss Brill’s fur alone** resembles **innocence and other variety character traits.** The fur is like a pet to her as told in the text; she brushes it and styles it as other people would care and brush their own dog or cat. She does not find out until later however, that her once very stylish “pet” is now the victim of jokes. The fur coat she wears is instead a preserved dead

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Another symbol is the woman in the ermine toque wearing a hat. Miss Brill looks down on her to make herself more superior. Miss Brill pokes fun saying that the women bought her shabby hat when her hair was yellow. This symbolizes how people think when they see Miss Brill. The woman in the ermine toque wearing the hat is played in the text as a shadow of Miss Brill. The woman is thrilled to see the well dressed man, just as Miss Brill is happy to see the young couple. Both of these characters however felt the disappointments when realizing their faults and the views of other people.

In Graham Greene’s short story called “The Destructors”, there are many uses of symbolism. One of these symbols include Old Misery’s house. Old Misery’s house is located in a setting where the **event of the** war **has** taken an effect on both the people and the land. But despite of all the damage done as a result of the war, there still manages to stand a beautiful house built by a famous architect, Christopher Wren, who was known for working for the wealthy upper class people. The house is a symbol of art, beauty, and the upper classes dominance. **The text** continues to show how Old Misery’s house symbolizes art, when Trevor tells the rest of the Wormsley Common Gang that the house is “beautiful” (page 51 ln 31). The house also sets up a target for the needs to destroy something artistic when it is in an

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Symbolism is a tool used to emphasize events and further describe deeper meanings. In “Miss Brill” the strong symbolism was described though her fur coat. The fur was her friend and a symbol of how lonely and empty she really feels. The destructors however use Old Misery’s house as a symbol of beauty in life even though around it might not seem so beautiful. Symbols in literature often lead to a deeper meaning then what they are actually describing in the story.

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AP English Literature and Composition

Composition: Independent Reading Research

January 6, 2010

**SKILLS PAGE**

**16.2 Avoid ref to the reader/ author**

MY SENTENCE: Writers like Katherine Mansfield**,** who wrote the short story “Miss Brill” and the author of “The Destructors**,**” Graham Greene, use a number of symbols to intrigue and stimulate the reader’s mind.

EXPLANATION: do not use references to the author or reader while writing a paper.

REVISED EXAMPLE: Writers like Katherine Mansfield**,** who wrote the short story “Miss Brill” and the author of “The Destructors**,**” Graham Greene, use a number of symbols to intrigue and stimulate **the mind.**

ORIGINAL EXAMPLE: Mario completed the even by doing a triple somersault.